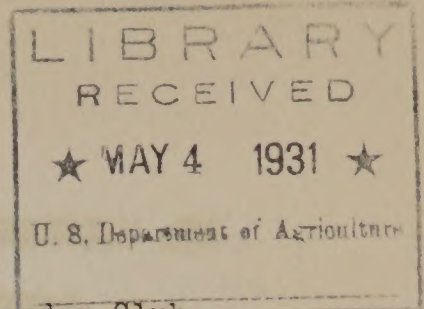


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MEETING, PROGRESSIVE GARDEN CLUB.



A radio discussion by members of the Progressive Garden Club, W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, presiding, delivered through WRC and 41 associated radio stations of the National Broadcasting Company, Tuesday, April 14, 1931.

ANNOUNCER:

Today, the Progressive Garden Club is holding a special meeting to discuss the question of growing plenty of fruit for home use. Mr. and Mrs. Brown - who have become regular members of the Club - are on hand and the meeting is just being called to order by the Chairman. Just a moment please -----

CHAIRMAN:

Will the meeting please come to order? ---- Our attendance is a little larger today and I doubt if we can all get around the big table, so if you will just gather in the front of the room we will proceed. ---- Now, I think everybody is comfortable. You will recall that on March 17, we held a special meeting at which Mr. and Mrs. Brown told us about their splendid vegetable garden. Today, we are holding another of those special meetings, this time to discuss the matter of growing plenty of fruit for home use, especially the small fruits. Our friend Brown has had many years of experience in growing fruit for home use and we might start out today by having him tell us what he grows in his fruit garden and orchard.

FARMER BROWN:

Well, I might say that I have about every kind of fruit that can be grown here in this climate. I grow strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, dewberries, currants and gooseberries, grapes, cherries, plums, quinces, pears, peaches, and apples. I tried figs, but was not very successful with them.

MISS GLASPEY:

You must have quite a fruit garden, Mr. Brown?

FARMER BROWN:

Yes, we have about half an acre of small fruits and over an acre in our home orchard. Of course, we often grow lots more fruit than we can use ourselves, but one of our neighbors - who keeps a roadside stand - sells our surplus for us.

(over)

MR. MILSTEAD:

I know a man who has built up quite a trade for berries in their season, right among his neighbors. He starts off with strawberries, then follows with two or three kinds of raspberries, then dewberries and blackberries, and finally grapes. He really makes quite a little money on his fruits and his market is right at his door.

FARMER BROWN:

We have no trouble selling all the good berries we have to spare.

MR. J. H. BEATTIE:

I have been quite lucky selling all my berries and other fruits to my local grocery store. I keep the store manager informed as to what I will have to sell, then I pack the fruit in attractive packages and deliver it to him. That ends it so far as I am concerned, except to cash my check occasionally.

CHAIRMAN:

Hold on a minute, you folks are talking about growing fruits for the market and of cashing checks. That's all right as a side line, maybe, but our topic for today's meeting is growing fruit for home use. It's fairly easy to grow several kinds of berries and apples, peaches, pears, and cherries throughout all the eastern and central sections of the country, but when you consider the Gulf Coast region, and the more northern parts of the country, you run into some difficulties, at least, it is not so easy to grow some of the fruits. By the proper selection of varieties, however, we can get by pretty well.

FARMER BROWN:

I have found that a great deal depends upon selecting the right varieties even here in the central section of the country.

CHAIRMAN:

Quite true, and this is a matter of much greater importance when you get a little out of the climatic range of any fruit. Now, in the case of strawberries, there are varieties that are adapted to almost every soil and climatic condition in the United States.

MR. MILSTEAD:

Strawberries are our strong pull. We always have three or four varieties planted in our garden. This year, we are trying the new variety known as Blakemore, originated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

FARMER BROWN:

Yes, I want to try the Blakemore. I understand that it is a good berry for canning and preserving, and that it does especially well in the South.

CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Brown, will you tell us just how you grow strawberries?

FARMER BROWN:

Well, to begin with, I select a fairly rich piece of ground that has been in clean cultivation for a couple of years so that I will not be bothered with grass and weeds. I plow and harrow it very thoroughly so that the soil will be fine and mellow. By the way, strawberries will grow on almost any type of soil that is reasonably rich and well drained. I mark off my rows three and one-half feet apart and set the plants two feet apart in the rows. I want my rows fairly wide so that I can cultivate with a horse. If I were growing strawberries in a small garden, I should make the rows somewhat closer for hand cultivation. The planting distances, however, depend largely on your system of cultivation. I got most of my information from two strawberry bulletins that the Department of Agriculture sent me.

I use the matted row system, that is, I allow the plants to send out runners and form new plants in a strip about a foot wide. I use a little fertilizer, scatter it along the rows and work it into the soil before I set my plants. Another thing, you want to be very careful that the roots of your strawberry plants do not dry out while you are handling them, and another thing don't set them too deep or too shallow, but with the crown of the plant just even with the top of the soil.

MISS GLASPEY:

How often do you plant a new strawberry bed, Mr. Brown?

FARMER BROWN:

Every two or three years. I find that it doesn't pay to clean out an old bed after the grass once gets started in it. I set a new bed in the spring, then after the old bed has borne its crop I plow it under.

MR. J. H. BEATTIE:

I plant a new bed about every two years. I find that it is easier to start a new bed than to renovate the old one, especially as Mr. Brown says, after the grass gets started. My soil is a rich clay loam and it is difficult to keep the grass from getting started in the strawberry bed, so I plant a new bed every second or third year, and after the old bed is through bearing for the season, I plow it and plant the ground to late sweet corn.

(over)

FARMER BROWN:

I don't think it pays to keep a strawberry patch too long.

MISS GLASPEY:

I would like to ask Mr. Brown if he has ever tried the ever-bearing strawberries?

FARMER BROWN:

Yes, I have tried them. The variety known as Progressive is most widely grown. The berries are of medium size and very dark red. We've had a good many nice strawberry shortcakes along in September and October from our everbearing patch. I'll tell you though you have to plant everbearing strawberries on mighty good ground and give the plants plenty of moisture.

CHAIRMAN:

Mrs. Brown, you have been keeping perfectly quiet, haven't said a word since you came into the meeting. I understand your strawberry preserves are famous, how about it?

MRS. BROWN:

Yes, I always make quite a lot of strawberry preserves. I like a firm fleshed, dark red berry for making preserves, then I often can strawberries and rhubarb together. They make a delicious sauce for use in the winter.

FARMER BROWN:

We always have strawberries until our raspberries begin to ripen. I have four or five varieties of raspberries in my fruit garden. I have the Ranere or St. Regis - often called everbearing - which ripens early and continues to produce berries until quite late, then a fall crop is often produced on the tips of the new canes. I have a couple of rows of Cuthbert, a large late, red raspberry. Then, I have a few plants of the Van Fleet, which can be grown throughout the greater part of the South. For a purple variety, I grow Royal - often called Royal Purple - and for a black raspberry, I grow the Cumberland. These varieties are all right for my section, but if I lived in Minnesota, or in the Dakotas, I would plant one or two of the special varieties such as Latham or the Sunbeam. I got my idea of raspberry varieties from Farmers' Bulletin No. 887 on raspberry culture.

MRS. BROWN:

We like the red raspberries for canning, and I always put up plenty for winter use. They look so pretty in the glass jars, and we think they are one of the most satisfactory canned fruits.

CHAIRMAN:

Next, we are going to discuss the Dewberry, and it is of special interest to our southern members, because there are varieties of dewberries that are suited to every part of the South. In fact, there are really two kinds of dewberries, the northern, which stands cold, and the southern which is more tender.

MR. MILSTEAD:

Don't they call it Trailing Blackberry, in some sections?

CHAIRMAN:

Yes, and it is extensively grown for the market in certain sections of North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, and Michigan. Recently, a new variety known as the Young or Youngberry has appeared, and it is becoming very popular in the South, and on the Pacific Coast.

MRS. BROWN:

On our way back from Florida last winter, while passing through North Carolina, we saw great fields of dewberries with the vines all tied to stakes.

FARMER BROWN:

I train my dewberries to stakes, and, occasionally, I stretch two or three wires on the stakes and train the dewberry vines to both the stakes and the wires. That makes a kind of hedge-row of them. I like the stakes best with the vines trained on them, because it is so easy to pick the berries.

MR. J. H. BEATTIE:

I have observed that in Michigan, New York, and other northern sections, they bank earth around the dewberry plants to protect them from cold in winter. I have had some trouble with the vines winter-killing right here in the central section.

FARMER BROWN:

Yes, they winterkill some. I always bank a little soil around the base of my plants in the fall, then level it off in the early spring after cold weather is over.

MRS. BROWN:

What is the best variety of dewberry to grow?

CHAIRMAN:

The Lucretia is one of the oldest and best varieties, in fact, it is the leading variety, except in the Gulf Coast States. In Texas, the Mayes is the leading variety. The new Young dewberry or Youngberry originated in southern Louisiana, so it is naturally adapted to growing in the South. It winterkills to some extent here near Washington, so would not be adapted for growing in the North.

MR. J. H. BEATTIE:

I am interested in blackberries. The old farm on which I was brought up was a natural blackberry patch, and it kept us busy cutting the briars, as we called them. I do like good blackberries in spite of the fight I had with the wild ones when I was a boy.

FARMER BROWN:

Blackberries will grow on almost any good, well-drained soil, but they do want good soil. I plant them about the same ~~time~~ as raspberries, except that I place the rows 6 feet apart, and the plants 3 feet apart in the rows. I stretch a couple of wires on posts along the rows and tie the canes to the wires. I always head back the new canes during the summer so that they do not become too tall. Heading back makes them branch.

MR. HILSTEAD:

Years ago, we grew a great many blackberries on our farm, and we mulched around the plants with straw to hold the moisture. We had plenty of straw on the place and perhaps it would be a little expensive if you had to buy the straw at market prices.

FARMER BROWN:

Quite right, the cost of the straw is the greatest objection, and it needs to be put on quite thickly - 5 to 8 inches - to be really effective. The mulch does hold the moisture and saves cultivation. Another advantage, it prevents suckers coming up from the roots of the blackberries, however, you will not have many suckers where the roots are not broken in cultivating.

MRS. BROWN:

When I was a girl, we used to dry blackberries for winter use. I haven't seen any dried blackberries in a long time. We like them canned and made into jam, only Mr. Brown objects to the seeds in the jam, because he says they get under his false teeth.

FARMER BROWN:

Yes, that's why I like blackberry jelly, there aren't any seeds in it, and it doesn't bother my teeth.

CHAIRMAN:

Well, the blackberry seeds don't bother me, because I am still worrying along without store teeth. Fact of the matter is to my notion, there is nothing much nicer than a good, plump blackberry pie, blackberry rolypoly or dumplings.

MISS GLASPEY:

Currant is my favorite jelly. I just dote on it. Give me good clear currant jelly every time. Tell me why it is that you do not find currant bushes in gardens like you used to?

FARMER BROWN:

There is a very good reason. Several years ago, it was noticed that the white pines in certain sections were all dying from some kind of a disease. It was found that the disease - known as White Pine Blister Rust - spent part of its life on currant and gooseberry plants, and that if it could not get on the currants and gooseberries, it soon died and did not injure the white pines. Now, the white pines being more valuable than the currants and gooseberries, it was decreed that all of the currants and gooseberries in the white pine regions should be destroyed and no more planted. That, however, does not prevent planting them in sections where the white pines are not important. I have two rows of currants across my fruit garden and also a few gooseberry bushes. Mary says she likes at least one gooseberry pie each year.

MR. J. H. BEATTIE:

It is my understanding that currants and gooseberries do not grow in the warmer parts of the South. Is that true?

CHAIRMAN:

Yes, quite true, but the Scuppernong and Thomas grapes are being used quite extensively for jellies and marmalades in the Southern States. Plenty of currants are being grown for our markets, and it only takes a few bushes to supply all that are needed for home use.

MR. MILSTEAD:

I know a lady who is making and selling jellies as a side line. Currant jelly is her specialty. Her husband keeps a gas station, and she has fitted up a booth and always has jellies on display. Her currant jelly has about as big a reputation as the famous Guava jelly of Florida.

CHAIRMAN: Say folks, do you know our time is up, and we haven't half covered this subject of growing fruit for home use. Well, the only thing I see to do is to stick down a peg, as the saying goes and carry it over for another meeting. Now, as we adjourn, let us give Mr. Brown a rising vote of thanks for the help he has given us..

